



TELECOMMUTING

COVID-19: A Deep Dive Into The Dos, Don'ts, and Best Practices
for Telecommuting

March 31, 2020

LEGAL DISCLAIMER



This communication and any accompanying documents are intended for educational and informational purposes only, do not constitute legal information, and should not be relied on as such.



While we hope that you will learn a lot today, we are not attorneys, and the information should not be construed as legal advice. If you are seeking legal advice, you are encouraged to consult an attorney.

PURPOSE

Explain the dos, don'ts, and best practices for implementing telecommunicating as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.



COMPONENTS

- 1 Define Temporary and Permanent Telework
- 2 Review the Dos and Don'ts of Implementing Telework
- 3 Discuss Best Practices for Implementing Telework
- 4 Q & A

DEFINITIONS



Temporary Telework

The intent of this exception is to address certain situations where the employee is retaining a residence in the commuting area for the regular worksite but is temporarily unable to report to the regular worksite for reasons beyond the employee's control.



Permanent Telework

Permanent telework, also referred to as remote work, is a flexible work arrangement in which an employee works most or all of the time from a different geographic area than the regular workplace/ work location.



TELECOMMUNICATING DO'S AND DON'TS

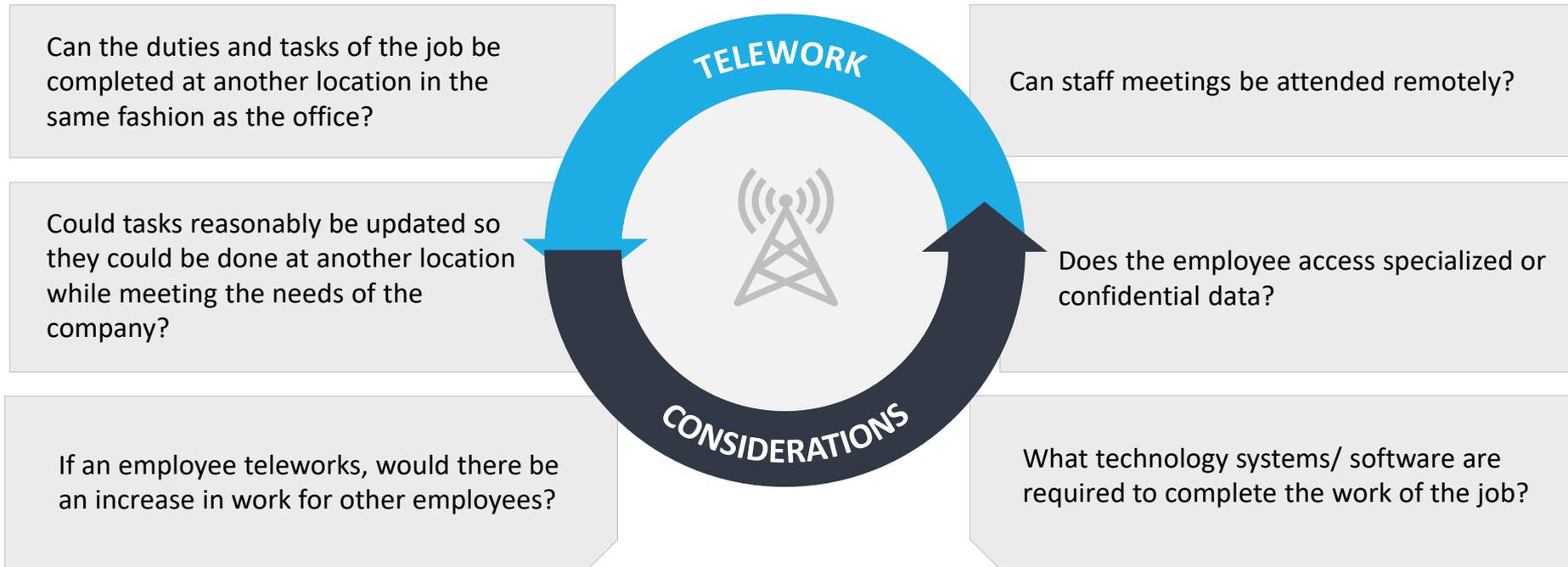
DOS

- Implement a teleworking policy into your handbook or as a separate policy that outlines the following:
 - timekeeping procedures for non-exempt employees;
 - expectations regarding working hours and overtime;
 - information about rest and lunch breaks (particularly in states where breaks are required);
 - data security requirements;
 - prerequisites for the use of personal devices for business purposes;
 - accommodation request procedures;
 - expectations for conduct;
 - reimbursement of business-related expenses, particularly in states such as California and Illinois that have statutes regarding it; and
 - any state-specific obligations related to employees working remotely.
- Implement a telecommunicating remote work agreement
 - Do this for temporary and permanent telework arrangements

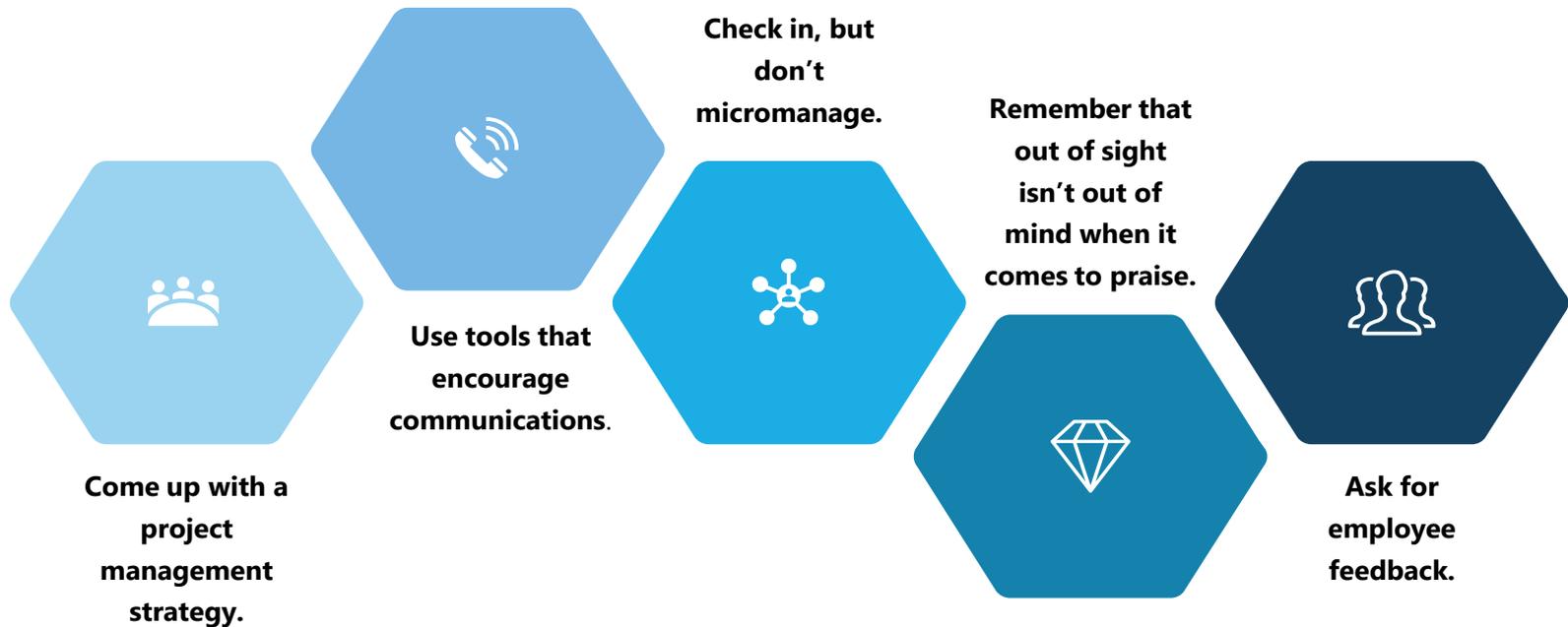
DON'TS

- Forget to create a telework protocol
- Forget to have employees sign a personal device acceptable use agreement (if applicable)
- Forget to create a telework daily or weekly agenda for employees
- Forget to consider data security measures and ensure all employees are trained in basic cybersecurity
- Allow employees to feel like they are socially isolated by the arrangement
- Allow employees to decrease their productivity just because they are not in the workplace environment
- Forget to require non-exempt employees to clock in and out or record their time worked

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TELEWORK



LEADING VIRTUAL TEAMS



HELPFUL TIPS FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS



ESTABLISH CLEAR GOALS.

Establish clear goals and responsibilities for team members. Use a software for tracking team progress and to encourage transparency within your virtual team.



HAVE REGULAR MEETINGS.

Frequent meetings allow for collaboration and build a routine. Regular meeting times improve team efficiency.



COLLABORATE AND COMMUNICATE.

Remote work can become isolating without regular communication. Utilize communication tools to make it easier to stay connected.



BE AVAILABLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

Whether you regularly check in with your team members, or respond to emails timely, being available as much as possible is extremely important

EMPLOYEE TELEWORK TIPS

- Define your workspace.
 - ❖ Establish a workspace that is free from distraction.
- Communicate your schedule.
 - ❖ Communicate your telework schedule with your team members and keep your calendar up to date.
- Use Technology to stay connected.
 - ❖ Communicate with team members and customers what phone number to utilize for direct communication.
 - ❖ Utilize instant messaging and email to communicate with team members as needed.
 - ❖ [Company's] recommended collaboration tools are [software tool] for instant messaging, [software tool] for file sharing, and [software tool] for video conferencing.
- Manage the virtual team effectively.
 - ❖ Determine and outline the team's objectives.
 - ❖ Set and maintain expectations.
 - ❖ Identify your team's technology toolkit.
- Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.
 - ❖ Start each day by completing the daily goals section of the [Telework Daily Agenda].
 - ❖ Communicate with your team if you need to adjust your telework plan.
- Schedule breaks and personal time.
 - ❖ Make sure that you schedule regular breaks and each lunch during regular times.
 - ❖ If you need to attend to a personal matter outside of regular breaks and lunches, this should be prearranged with your [Supervisor, manager, member of management, or leader].
 - ❖ Avoid social media and checking personal email throughout the workday.



CAMERAS ON.

Well-lit faces are more engaging in conversations.



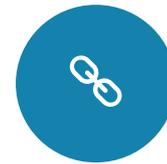
AVOID DISTRACTIONS.

Join from a place where you can focus.



MUTE YOURSELF.

Mute yourself when you're not speaking to avoid unnecessary background noise.



INCLUDE THE LINK.

Add the link to your video conference in the meeting invitation and agenda.



TESTING 1,2,3.

Check your system in advance. If you need help, ask for it!

A background image of a person with curly hair, wearing a yellow shirt, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The image is dimmed and serves as a backdrop for the title.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING

SAMPLE TELEWORK GUIDELINES



- [Supervisor, manager, member of management, or leader] must be clear about expectations with employees for maintaining current work hours or if there is flexibility based on individual circumstances.
- Employees must maintain confidentiality by working in a private location in the home that is away from other individuals.
- Employees may not allow unauthorized, non-company employees to view or access any work-related confidential information.
- The Employee will remain obligated to comply with all company rules, policies, practices, and procedures, including safeguarding confidential information.
- The specific job duties and assignments authorized to be conducted at this alternate work site are [the same as when working at the company office or specify duties or indicate there is an attached description of duties and expectations].
- The Employee will continue to receive compensation at the same rate as before implementing the alternative work arrangement for telecommuting.
- The Employee will be responsible for maintaining a work environment that is ergonomically sound, clean, safe and free of obstruction and hazardous situations.
- The Employee must report work-related injuries to Employee's supervisor at the earliest reasonable opportunity, but no later than 24 hours after such injury, using the standard injury reporting process.
- All the work-related equipment and items remain the property of the company, are subject to the same business use restrictions as if it were on-site and must be returned to the company upon request.
- The equipment, supplies, and other property provided by the Employer for the employee to utilize to complete telework are provided exclusively for use in providing services to the Employer.
- The Employee is expected to notify their supervisor as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 48 hours after equipment malfunction or failure.

1

How do I know my employees are really working at home?

Some supervisors express concern that when their employees are teleworking, they will not be able to monitor that employee's work effort, but when approached correctly, supervisors discover they are better able to monitor the work by shifting the focus from how much work the employee looks like he/she is accomplishing to how much he/she actually is accomplishing. By focusing on the work product instead of the work activity, many supervisors find they are better able to communicate clear expectations to their employees. The resulting agreement on job expectations often leads to increases in employee productivity and job satisfaction.



2

Do employees have the right to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic?

No. Telework is not a universal employee benefit or an employee right. Unless the employee is subject to any applicable union agreement, management decides whether the employee can work off-site, depending on the nature of the position and the characteristics of the employee. Management has the right to end an employee's use of the telework option if, for example, the employee's performance declines or if the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs.

However, please note that if an employee requests emergency leave under the FFCRA, and they are able to work from home, they must do so as long as their job duties allow.



3

How can a supervisor monitor work performance when the employee is not physically present?

Managers can measure what the employee produces by examining the product or results of the employee's efforts. It is also helpful to use project schedules, key milestones, regular status reports and team reviews. Supervisors may call employees who are working at home.



4

What are some of the issues that teleworkers should be aware of?

- Coping with interruptions and distractions — Often friends, neighbors and family members do not realize that a teleworker is working. Although an occasional, brief interruption may be welcome, teleworkers must learn to keep interruptions to a minimum.
- Working long hours — Teleworkers need to be careful they do not slip into "workaholism." Some personality types have the tendency to work longer hours than usual when they are teleworking because they can focus so well on their work. Teleworkers should give careful consideration to the balance or integration of their work and personal lives to avoid burnout.
- Exercising self-control — If teleworkers find themselves procrastinating, they should evaluate their work habits and make necessary changes to ensure productivity.
- Designating space — A designated work area is recommended for teleworking. A separate workspace may mean fewer distractions or interruptions and a higher level of discipline and organization.
- Gaining support — A family's or supervisor's attitude may sometimes be detrimental to a telework arrangement. Teleworkers must work to gain the support and understanding of those around them.



5

How does teleworking affect morale and productivity among workers who continue to work in the office?

When a telework program is implemented properly and the teleworker selection process is clear and objective, any possible negative effects on the morale and productivity of non-teleworkers can be minimized. It is important to clearly communicate to all employees that teleworkers are selected on the basis of their job functions and their work performance characteristics. It is also critical that an employee's telework arrangement does not increase other employees' workloads. When management does not handle the transition carefully, objectively and transparently, jealousy and resentment can arise from non-teleworkers who mistakenly believe that teleworkers are not really working. In other instances, co-workers are not interested in teleworking, but respect those who do. Managers need to ensure that all employees are treated equitably when it comes to expectations and performance, regardless of where they are working. As with any organizational change or shift, communication is the key to its success!



6

Which employees are ideal for teleworking?

The ideal teleworker is self-motivated, well organized, a problem-solver, and someone who can work independently with minimal supervision. Successful teleworkers have a high degree of job skill and knowledge, and strong time management skills. Teleworkers like working at home or away from the office for at least part of the week and do not mind working alone. Teleworking is not ideal or desirable for every employee.



7

What does Teleworking offer the manager or supervisor?

A successful telework program can improve organizational efficiency, raise the quality and quantity of work, boost employee morale and job satisfaction, and lower your employee turnover rate. In addition, the enhanced communication that a telework program fosters can further develop your own skills as a manager.



8

What should employers do if teleworking does not work?

Sometimes teleworking does not work. If a teleworker's quality of work declines, treat it as you would any performance issue. Review the telework agreement and give your employees a chance to improve. The employee's telework agreement should include a clause stating that the telecommunicating arrangement may be cancelled for operational or performance issues.





THANK YOU

Please contact TPC Vision,
if you have any questions.

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